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Mr. Khrushchov's Escape Hatch on Berlin

Noon, Aug. 16

If the unforeseen and uncontrollable does not happen—an uncomfortably big if—it looks as if the worst is over in the Berlin crisis. There is an almost audible sigh of relief here that no uprising followed the cutting of travel between East and West Berlin; a significant silence settled on the worst of our Senatorial and military tough guys when it looked for a moment as if this were *it;* the gap between talking war and really wanting to make it suddenly appeared, and it was wide. There is more understanding than appears on the surface that the outflow of refugees from East Germany forced action, and since the deed had to be done, it was best that it was done quickly. Indeed this unilateral action removed what appeared to be the one real stumbling block of negotiations. The West seems pretty much resigned to accepting the status quo in East Europe for the time being anyway, and that may be a long time. The Germans, who no longer enjoy the same privileged status which was theirs in the days of John Foster Dulles, have been told that once the German election is over they must be prepared for negotiations in which the Oder-Neisse line will be recognized and the East German regime given at least de facto recognition. The East seems ready to leave Western rights in and to Berlin alone, again at least for the time being. Premier Khrushchov has made it clear on several occasions that this can be had for de facto recognition of East Germany. Thus despite all the hullabaloo, the shape of a settlement is already visible. The sticking point was the right of East Germans to flee into and out of Berlin. The West could hardly be expected to accord this at the bargaining table. Mr. Krushchov by creating a fait accompli and taking the odium on himself has in this brutal sense cleared the way for negotiations.

The Parachute to Safety

Like one of his cosmonauts, Premier Khrushchov has also equipped himself with an escape hatch in the Berlin crisis from which he can parachute safely to diplomatic terra firma. If the situation gets too difficult, he can have his penny *and* his cake by signing a separate treaty with East Germany—and presenting that as a great victory at home—while reserving Western rights in an annex. The advantages of leaving the question of these rights open by this device is that it could sidestep a crisis, leave the Russians with another handle on the East German regime and put some crucial issues on ice whence they could be taken out and utilized again for purposes of bargaining or blackmail. The East German Foreign Minister, Lothar Bolz, hinted at such a solution when he told the GDR Parliament last Friday that if a separate treaty is made at a Communist bloc peace conference, provisions regarding Berlin would be in a separate annex. "Our willingness," he said *(New York Herald-Tribune,* Aug. 12) "to sign such an annex shows our readiness for an understanding on a reasonable solution to all controversial questions which might arise after the signing of the peace treaty, because of the 'island' position of Berlin and termination of the Western occupation regime there." This implies that the "controversial questions" bound to arise until Western agreement is obtained would be left open in the separate treaty. This hint on the eve of action splitting the city has been given much too little attention. It seems to go a step beyond earlier and similar suggestions dropped by the Russians.

The line laid down at the two days of private briefings given the press here this week is I understand that we acquiesce in the shutting off of East Berlin, that we are ready to negotiate but that we are also prepared for war, nuclear if necessary, if allied rights in West Berlin are threatened. It would be a mistake for the Russians to overplay their hand and imagine that this is sheer bluff. The confused and the irresolute may turn irrationally stubborn if pushed too far; the mistake that Hitler made can also be made by Khrushchov. Mankind has been brought to the brink by the Soviet Premier, and it will not be easy to edge back to safety without a slipup. The West Germans are pressing for "strong measures"—they are very much in a let's-you-and-him-fight mood though they would be the first victims. Their East German kinsfolk do not stir my sympathy; Germans are getting a very mild taste of what they imposed on the rest of Europe; they are not being shipped as slave laborers into the Soviet bloc or fed to crematoria; it is certainly not worth a world war to save them from forcible communization, particularly

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Terrific Stuff—
Now That We're Sure It Won't Work

"The plan to tax Moscow with the counter demand for the self-determination of Germans has been discussed here for several weeks. The Administration has shown some concern, however, that such a propaganda effort, aimed primarily at the independence-minded peoples of the uncommitted nations, might at the same time encourage a popular uprising in East Germany.

"Such an uprising, it was feared, might have drawn West Germany and the United States into open conflict with the Soviet army. Now that Moscow can demonstrate an apparent ability to suppress the East German populace, however, the self-determination argument is to be pressed."

—Max Frankel, fresh from a State Department briefing, in the New York Times Aug. 16.

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As In Past Years, Only Official Viewpoint Heard at Hearings on Nuclear Shelter Program

Opponents of Civil Defense Denied Chance to Testify at Holifield Hearings

Though civil defense is a highly controversial subject, this year's Holifield committee hearings on a nuclear shelter program refused to hear any opposition witnesses. As in the other hearings on the subject which Congressman Holifield has been holding annually, the witness list was confined to spokesmen for the AEC, the Naval Radiological Laboratory, the Rand Corporation and other official agencies. The National Committee for A Sane Nuclear Policy asked to be heard but was told by Holifield that he did not plan to call any "outside witnesses." The cast of characters at these hearings remains pretty much the same from year to year and those—like Governor Meyner of New Jersey and Senator Young of Ohio—who believe civil defense a delusion in the nuclear age—never get a chance to present their point of view.

Still Fighting the Indian Wars

Civil defense gets caught between two strong opposing viewpoints, one of the military, the other of the peace-minded. The former tend to regard it with contempt as somehow cowardly, and fear it may divert funds from armaments. At last year's hearing, General Le May, now Air Force Chief of Staff, was opposed to putting "money into holes into the ground to crawl into. . . . I would rather spend more of it on offensive weapons systems to deter the war in the first place." Admiral Arleigh Burke seemed to think civilians ought to be more reliant and talked about "my grandfather, sir, who went out to the western plains. . . ." When Holifield said tartly, "Your grandfather wasn't faced with nuclear fallout," Burke insisted, "but he was faced with a lot of other things, and he defended himself."

On the other hand, the peace-minded hate to admit that nuclear war is possible despite its suicidal character, and fear —quite rightly—that shelter programs will be used to indoctrinate the idea that nuclear war can be fought successfully. Fortunately a substratum of common sense everywhere has made ordinary people impervious to such indoctrination. But there is an in-between group which fears that war is coming, and looks about for some advance measures to give what protection they can to the survivors. Holifield, a humane man, belongs to this group. He lacks what it takes to fight for peace, a politically dangerous cause, and falls back instead on the fight for shelters. He himself is in favor of a multi-billion dollar program to build real shelters against blast and fire as well as fallout but is "going along" with the Kennedy Administration's weak program of marking basements in buildings because he hopes the program will be expanded and because he understands that Congress has barely been persuaded even to accept this much.

Kahn Complains of His Critics

Herman Kahn in his appearance before the Holifield hearings on civil defense shelters for nuclear war complained about reviews of his book On Thermonuclear War **and told about his new Hudson Institute, which is to be a sort of private Rand Corporation of his own. Kahn put into the record an unpublished letter to** Scientific American, **protesting James R. Newman's acid review of Kahn's book. He said Walter Millis, another reviewer, was "just stark raving mad" in his views of Kahn "but we are all entitled to some idiosyncrasy." Kahn seemed especially offended with one unnamed reviewer who wrote "unless thermonuclear war can be reestablished in the public and official mind as something which it is possible both to fight and to survive, it is unlikely that there will be a thermonuclear war." Kahn endorsed the Administration's new civil defense program as "the right way to get the business done." He said later in the hearing that his new Hudson Institute hopes to get a contract from the government to do a study of civil defense.**

I would like to see a special Congressional joint committee set up to give the whole subject the widest kind of investigation with all viewpoints thoroughly aired. The peace-minded cannot rationally oppose any kind of civil defense. On the other hand, they need not fear indoctrination in nuclear war. This year's hearings, like last year's nuclear war hearings before the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, backfired. Even presentations by AEC spokesmen designed to show that nuclear war was feasible, and expert computations based on unrealistic assumptions to present the facts in as "moderate" a way as possible, turned out to be so horrible that they only added to public awareness of the suicidal character of modern war. The two AEC witnesses at this year's hearings to whom I called attention in last week's issue, Dr. Charles L. Dunham and R. L. Corsbie, both tried to downgrade the danger of nuclear war. But peace groups could do worse than to use their testimony, when these hearings are published, to show that there is no sane alternative to peace in the nuclear age.

Implicit in the new civil defense program is the writing off of urban populations wherever cities are hit. Since our cities are apt to be the main targets of any retaliatory strike, the Mayors of our major cities ought to join in asking for a full inquiry. The only real civil defense for cities is to put them underground and even then we would find that as the warheads grow bigger, the cities would have to go deeper. Civil defense becomes another dimension of the arms race in its final and most fantastic form. The more fully all this can be debated, the more it will awaken people to the need to act for peace.

West Germans Dubious of the Kind of Shelter Space on Which Our CD Program Relies

"Bonn, Aug. 6 (AP)—West Germany plans no big changes in its admittedly inadequate civil defense program despite the threat posed by the Berlin crisis. . . . Experts in the Interior Ministry, which has charge of civil defense, concede the civilians of West Germany would be largely at the mercy of an enemy using nuclear weapons. But they say the public here, like that in other Western countries, is not ready to sanction the outlay of large sums to get effective protection. . . .

"Available for temporary shelter are basements under private homes, apartment houses and business buildings plus the remaining bunkers [from the last war]. Interior Ministry experts look upon these as better than nothing, but emphasize their extreme inadequacy in case of nuclear explosion and fallout."

—New York Herald Tribune, Aug. 7

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Even Humphrey, Disarmament Champion, Reports Heavy and Hostile Flow of Mail

Despite Bipartisan Support, Outlook Poor for Arms Agency Bill

"The awesome character of modern weapons and the speed with which they can be delivered, sharply accentuated by ideological and political conflicts, impose an element of urgency in the consideration of all means to lessen tensions. Moreover, the arms race itself, creates an element of instability and insecurity."

—Secretary of State Dean Rusk

"The means by which we can avoid both a debilitating and dangerous arms race and the occurrence of war itself have become one of the greatest challenges to mankind."

—John J. McCloy, the President's disarmament adviser.

With these eloquent statements, these two top Kennedy administration figures last Monday opened the Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearings on S. 2180, to establish a U.S. Disarmament Agency for World Peace and Security. The hearings push forward a measure long advocated by Senator Humphrey (D. Minn.) and pledged by Kennedy in his campaign for the Presidency. It would give the stepchild of disarmament policy a bureaucratic home, with direct accessibility to the President and the Secretary of State, and centralize within it control of such key projects as improvement of nuclear test detection, a matter hitherto left to agencies like AEC and the Pentagon with little interest in discovering anything that might smooth the path to disarmament. The surprise of the first day's hearing was a letter of endorsement from former President Eisenhower. In its wake, a solid phalanx of Republicans were testifying for the bill as this copy was being written: Henry Cabot Lodge, General Alfred M. Gruenther, former Secretary of Defense Thomas S. Gates, Jr., and former Secretary of State Christian Herter. Another Republican, former Secretary of Defense Robert A. Lovett, turned up the first day to advocate the bill but an outburst on his part (see box below) threatened to do more harm than good.

Unfortunately, despite this wide bipartisan backing, the outlook for passage was not good unless a lot more public support can be whipped up than is now in evidence. The reasons: hearings have begun too late in the session; few Senators seem interested—only Humphrey and Symington (the latter at best ambivalent as the aviation lobby's chief mainstay in the Senate) stayed throughout the hearings. The public cannot easily be led in two contradictory directions—toward a stepped up arms race and toward a disarmament agency; the war scare has discouraged the advocates and infuriated the opponents of the bill. Even Humphrey, who has been engaged in a long and usually lonely fight for disarmament in the Senate for years, admitted the second day that while editorial opinion is 90 percent for the new agency, he has been the target of a heavy mail "without exception" opposed to the bill, calling him "Communist" and "appeaser" for putting it forward at this time.

Indicative of unthinking public temper on the right was a statement put into the record in disgust by Chairman Fulbright in which the American Legion's National Commander Wm. R. Burke told the Virginia Legion convention in Roanoke, "If the survival of the U.S. means that Castro and Khrushchov must be destroyed, and I frankly believe that it does, then let us get on with the task." Symington asked McCloy whether he did not think that creating a Disarmament Agency might "affect the willingness of the American people to make the necessary sacrifices to provide the various forms of strength and the will to use them—both of which are necessary to our survival." McCloy replied that the "growing knowledge" of the "terrible consequences of a thermonuclear war" did not make them (the American people) "scared and run away" but that "they want this government to consider seriously the possibilities of avoiding such a war" through arms control and disarmament "because the alternative is so terrible." Symington thought this "a very good answer" but will it get through to the country in time to develop sufficient support?

Secret Testing by the Soviets?

Sen. HUMPHREY: "Just so the headlines do not distort the evidence, do you have any evidence that there is clandestine testing going on by the Soviets?

Mr. John J. McCLOY [adviser to the President on disarmament]: No, I do not have any convincing evidence.

Sen. HUMPHREY: Does anybody in the government have any?

Mr. McCLOY: All I can say is that I have never seen any evidence which is convincing to me, and I think I have seen it all.

—Senate Foreign Relations Committee, hearing on Disarmament Agency Bill, S 2180, August 14.

Supposed Elder Statesman Slips Into Slander About the Peace Movement

Mr. [Robert A.] LOVETT [former Secretary of Defense]: I must confess to a degree of worry in that area of security requirements . . . because it seems to me that an agency of this extraordinary power [the proposed U.S. Disarmament Agency] . . . one that cuts, in effect, into the most sensitive areas of most of our agencies, should do something more than the normal security checks. This would be an almost ideal place to attempt to infiltrate. . . .

"It seems clear to me that this is going to be a Mecca, a magnet, for a wide variety of screwballs . . . a natural magnet for those rather uninspiring groups that have slogans 'Better Red Than Dead,' 'Surrender and Survive,' or the give-up groups. . . . It will be a great pity to have this launched and shortly become a Bureau of Beatniks. . . ."

Sen. SYMINGTON: As a matter of fact, wouldn't you rather be Red than dead is a slogan that was coined by one of the world's great philosophers and therefore in the phase itself you are going beyond the beatniks to those people who, for sincere reasons of religion or because of developed pacifism, they believe that any agency that is involved in the disarmament field might be a place that they would like to go and therefore you would like to see them screened, as I understand it, from the standpoint of being sure that they have an objective approach.

—Sen. Foreign Relations Hearing on S 2180, Aug. 14

It was disappointing to hear Mr. Lovett, an otherwise cultivated man, talk in such terms of the peace movement. We challenge Mr. Lovett to identify a single group foolish enough to use any of the slogans he purports to quote. As for "rather be Red than dead" that was not coined by Bertrand Russell at all but by Joseph Alsop in hysterical distortion of an interview with Russell.

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The World Cannot Go On Solving Problems by Nuclear Threats

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since it does not take much contact with the West Germans to sense how justifiably the Russians and the Poles fear them and their hopes of regaining their old territories in the East by the threat of nuclear war. The price Germany is paying for Hitlerism is mild compared to the price it imposed on Poland, the Soviet Union and the Jewish people. Eichmann is in this respect a typical figure.

An Almost Hopeless Problem

Unfortunately, the Russians do not offer a solution either. The world cannot go on in this way, solving problems by the threat of nuclear holocausts as Mr. Khrushchov is doing. West Berlin's position *is* abnormal, but so is East Germany's. A united Germany, certainly an armed one, would only be the prelude to a series of revanchist crises. But a divided Germany under Russian control is a monstrosity that can only feed the flames of German nationalism and militarism. Poland lived close to a century divided among Russia, Germany and Austria but Germany is not Nineteenth Century Poland. West Germany is already the most powerful nation in Europe west of the Russian border, and almost inevitably bound sooner or later to play a fatal role again in human affairs. It is a wan hope that the Russians may provide a better regime than Ulbricht's once the situation is stabilized; how remove him after so great a triumph? Adenauer has rejected every broader scheme, from Eden's through Kennan's to Rapacki's, by which Germany might have had a chance of peaceful reunification. If his regime now takes the path of trade reprisals, it will only dig the ditch deeper between the two Germanies, and between the two Europes. Facile propaganda about "self-determination" is a bogus Madison Avenue medicine for this situation. The uncommitted nations are quite cynical about the principle. Angola bulks larger in their vision than Germany. They understand that each of the two contending blocs is enthusiastic about self-determination only in the other's domain. The part of wisdom is to negotiate soon and as quickly as possible, not just with West Berlin in mind, but to prevent a deep split which must sooner or later bring on World War III.

The battle we can win for the hearts and minds of men will be won by subtler and more honest means. Mr. Khrushchov has hardly increased his stature in the world by big talk of a 100-megaton weapon and about bombs falling on the Acropolis. If we talked that way, the Russians would be denouncing us for war-mongering barbarism. I hope the Voice of America will beam to Russia those parts of Khrushchov's fulminations about war and "grandeur" which were censored out by his own press. There is a dangerous streak of primitivism in the Soviet Premier. The President at his last press conference provided a contrast which, if continued, must make a deep impression on world opinion. His restraint, his rebuke for the wild men in Congress on Cuba, his support of Senator Fulbright against our military rightists, his tone and style, were of a very different order, though both he and Khrushchov make the same kind of speeches, combining military threats with offers of negotiations. We are particularly heartened by signs of changing attitudes toward Cuba; a rapprochement with Castro would increase respect for our country. Let us approach the Berlin crisis in a big way, recognizing Russia's real fears, safeguarding the people of West Berlin as we are honor bound to do, but seeking to utilize the crisis as a means of moving a sobered world closer to a better order. This is a challenge to all that is best in our traditions, and in the President; here an ambitious young man could find the path to greatness in the service of mankind.

Freedom of Movement Note

Just to teach those East German bureaucrats a lesson and make starkly clear their interference with the right of free movement, the State Department we assume will now cease trying to get a new bill through Congress restricting the right of travel, lift the Iron Curtain we impose on Cuba, China, North Korea, North Vietnam and Albania, and reverse its recent refusal to allow pro-Castro newspaperman Lyle Stuart of The Independent (a New York monthly) to visit Cuba.

Vacation—The Weekly Does Not Go to Press the Last Two Thursdays in August—Next Issue Dated Sept. 11

VACATION NOTICE

The Weekly does not go to press the last two Thursdays in August. We are closing down for vacation; no changes of address can be made during this holiday period. I am on my way to Belgrade for the neutrals' conference and if all goes well our next issue should be dated Sept. 11. We take advantage of this notice to thank our readers for the unprecedented spurt in our circulation this past year, and to express our appreciation for the many kind notes we have received. No newspaperman has ever had a more warmly responsive audience. We are deeply grateful for it.

I. F. Stone

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